

Fort Riley,  
Building # 234  
234 Lower Brick Road  
Fort Riley  
Riley County  
Kansas

HABS No. KS-54-P

HABS  
KANS,  
81-FORIL,  
2-P-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. KS-54-P

FORT RILEY, BUILDING # 234

Location: 234 Lower Brick Row, Fort Riley, Riley County, Kansas

USGS Junction City Quadrangle Universe Mercator  
Coordinates: 14.692725.4326040

Present Owner: U.S. Department of the Army

Present Occupant: Building # 234-A is occupied by Captain David Teeples, and  
# 234-B is occupied by Chaplain Seed.

Present Use: Double family officers quarters

Significance: Building # 234 at Fort Riley is one of six brick duplexes completed in 1931 on Lower Brick Row. These structures combined with the 1889 buildings (#'s 117, 119, and 121), two more built in 1903 (Buildings # 118 & # 122) and another like Buildings #118 & #122, built in 1906 (Building # 125), to complete the oval court that is Lower Brick Row. Capt. George E. Pond, Constructing Quartermaster at Fort Riley from 1885-1891, authored a plan for the fort's expansion after it became a school for the training of cavalry and light artillery troops in 1886. His plan included six residences laid out in an oval pattern for "non-commissioned staff officers" on Lower Brick Row. Building # 234 represents one of two types of standard duplexes built in 1931 on Lower Brick Row and in 1939 on Stone Court and Riley Place. While Building # 234 has a gable roof and a half circle arch over the entrance the other variation, represented by Building # 235, has a hipped roof with an entablature above the entrance. Both variations were built in brick on Lower Brick Row and Riley Place, and in rock-faced ashlar limestone on Stone Court. Thus, because the same plans were used for buildings in three distinct developments they suggest the army's increased standardization. Building # 234's grassy court setting utilizes the area's natural topography and creates a small community atmosphere that reflected the current "garden apartment" ideals as well as the army's effort to economize on roads and utilities. Their role as housing for non-commissioned officers is suggested in the simple designs with few ornamentations and their off-the-main-post location. The fort's hierarchical layout of buildings located the high ranking officers near the main post with lesser ranks dispersed farther out.

Lower Brick Row's distinctive uniform brick facades are the result of large scale planning unique to the military. Though the court took more than forty years to complete the resulting buildings are similar in style, scale, and decorative features.

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The Real Property Cards and the Engineer's Historical Record Book, both located at the Directorate of Engineering and Housing, Fort Riley (DEH), give 1931 as the erection date.
2. Architect: Unknown. However, Capt. Robert A. Blair was the constructing quartermaster sent by army officials in Washington to Fort Riley at the time these quarters were built. As was the practice when any large-scale construction took place, the Washington bureau sent out a constructing quartermaster who was fully in charge of the project, independent of local commanders.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Building # 234 was owned by the Department of War, since 1947 referred to as the Department of the Army.
4. Builder: Bids for the construction of Building # 234 and eight other non-commissioned officer's quarters were opened on November 5, 1930 by Capt. Robert A. Blair, Quartermaster. Capt. Blair collected several bids and sent them to Washington, where officials decided to award the contract to Busboom Brothers of Fairbury, Nebraska who bid \$125,670 for the erection of all nine buildings (Junction City Union, Nov. 5 & 18, 1930, page 1; See also Junction City Union, (weekly), Oct. 2, 9, & 30, and Nov. 6).
5. Original plans and construction: Copies of original blue prints for Building # 234 dated Sept. 16, 1930 are located in the Directorate of Engineering and Housing at Fort Riley (DEH). These plans include front and side elevations, floor plans, and plans for alternate basements (which include garages that were never constructed). They also show front and rear porch details, and indicate construction materials. The DEH office also has plans for kitchen and bathroom renovations. The Real Property Cards give a final cost of \$14,203.26 while the Engineer's Historical Record Book gives a figure of \$14,194.45 (DEH).
6. Alterations and additions: Building # 234 has had no major exterior renovations except for the undocumented removal of the

balcony above the sun porch on either side elevation. On the interior, on both sides of the duplex, the kitchen and bathroom have been remodeled. This may have occurred in 1971 as the Engineer's Historic Record Book indicates a large expenditure that year. Also, the door between the dining room and the kitchen have been removed. The floor plans indicate that there were coal bins in the basement probably removed when the current gas boilers were installed (date unknown).

- B. Historical Context: Building # 234 was built, along with nine other two-story brick duplexes, on Lower Brick Row in 1931, completing the irregular ellipse shaped court begun in 1889 and added to in 1903 and 1906. The 1931 buildings were erected three years after "the frame buildings occupied by officers were destroyed by fire." After the fire, "an emergency call was sent to Senator Capper and Congressman Strong asking then to get quarters at Riley" (Junction City Union, (weekly) Oct. 30, 1930, p. 1). The late 1920's and early 1930's were boom years at Fort Riley with more than fifty residential structures built. It was in March 1926 that the Army undertook a building program "to replace with proper permanent buildings the temporary structures erected during the first World War, many of which were still in use" (Quartermaster Support of the Army, p. 713). This program covered a ten-year period with a total of \$148 million spent on housing construction across the country. The army initiated the program in 1927 and watched it spring forward during the depression when Washington politicians increased the project, hiring additional men, to help relieve the unemployment rolls. In November of 1929 the President asked the Corps to expediate public works construction and within seven months more than \$19,500,00 worth of contracts had been let (*Ibid*, p. 714). The program worked admirably as Junction City officials noted that the economic crisis had not impacted on their locale.

## PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Building # 234 is a two-story brick duplex built for non-commissioned officers on Lower Brick Row. It has a gable roof and an arched fantail over the entry. This building type also came with a hipped roof and a central entry with an entablature above. Both variations appeared in brick on Lower Brick Row and, by 1939, in rock-faced ashlar limestone on Stone Court. These buildings have several simplified Georgian elements including a rectangular main block with symmetrical, two-story facades, six over six windows with extra-wide first-story facade windows, and front stoops with pilasters. Their austere detailing

suggests the army's attempt to cut costs as does their court layout. The Corps utilized "modern methods of city planning for grouping building of roads, sewer and water systems, and other utilities" (Quartermaster Support of the Army, p. 713).

2. Condition of fabric: Building # 234 is in excellent condition both internally and externally.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Building # 234's main block is six bays wide (four bays on the second story) by two bays, and each side wing (9'11" x 16'3") is three bays by four bays (SEE HABS photos # KS-54-P-1 & 2).
2. Foundations: Building # 234 has a plain red brick foundation that is undifferentiated from the walls. The foundation varies in width from eight to twelve inches. The eight inch sections sit on eight inch thick concrete bases that extend just below the frost line.
3. Walls: The walls are plain red brick, with one row of headers followed by five rows of stretchers. The sun porch has plain lapped-board walls with three column support (one at each corner and one central column on the front elevation).
4. Structural system, framing: Building # 234's red brick eight inch thick load-bearing walls support the wooden floor structure and partition walls. In the basement there is an additional ten inch steel I-beam running east-to-west resting on two square brick pillars and supporting the floor of the first story .
5. Porches and stoops: At the center two bays on the facade are two separate stoops. They have a thick square concrete block base with black, wrought iron balusters (See HABS photo # KS-54-P-1). The rear porch (each half is 4'10" x 6'0") is continuous and covers the middle two bays. It has a concrete floor above a brick foundation, and concrete steps to either side with wrought-iron railings. A lapped board partition wall with two screened panels at the top divides the porch in half. The porch's three wooden columns are squared and have a cyma reversa molding and several rounded bands of trim at the top. The porch entablature has a cyma reversa molding at the top, several bands of squared molding followed by a plain frieze above an simple entablature. Below the porch's front brick wall is a stairway that leads to the basement entry. In front of the porch and at the top of the wall on the other side of the basement stairway there is a decorative wrought-iron railing (See HABS photo # KS-54-D-3).

6. Chimneys: At either side elevation there is a gable end, interior, brick chimney. It has a stone cap and is not corbelled. These are probably the original chimneys as the same style is present in the blueprints (See HABS photo # KS-54-P-2).
  7. Openings:
    - a. Doorways and doors: The central doorway has two plain, squared pilasters each with molding at the top and a half-round fantail arch above. The arch has two bands of rounded molding at its outer edge. Inside there is a sunburst pattern made of lapped wood which is recessed about six inches. Over the door there is a plain wood architrave entablature (See HABS photo # KS-54-P-1).
    - b. Windows: The typical window is a six over six sash with no lintel and a plain, smooth-faced concrete sill that has a small decorative upturning lip at each top corner. The first-story facade windows are six over six with two over two operable sidelights. The side wings (three bays by four bays) have bands of six over six windows with no lintels and plain, flat wood sills about six inches thick (See HABS photo # KS-54-P-2). Basement windows are three-light casement, with smooth-faced limestone sills, and are located one on each side of the facade below the outer bays. The rear elevation windows are the same as the facade, one on each side of the facade below the outer bays. The rear elevations windows are the same as the facade but the second-story windows share their surrounds with the rear entrance, and have a large square wooden panel below (See HABS photo # KS-54-P-3).
  8. Roof:
    - a. Shape and covering: Building # 234 has a low-pitched gable roof with composition shingles. The side wings have a very low-shed roof of raised-seam metal.
    - b. Cornice: The front and rear elevations have a return box cornice with a cyma reversa molding above, and a plain fascia and architrave below. At the side elevation the plain board frieze is about four inches wide and runs against the wall under the eaves and comes to a point above the cornice return (See HABS # KS-54-P-2).
- C. Description of Interior:
1. Floor plans: Building # 234's front door opens into the square living room (15' x 16'6") which opens into the dining room (11' x

12'9") to the north through a wide doorway and into the sun porch (9'9" x 16') to the east through a set of French doors. The dining room opens into the kitchen (8'2" x 11') through a small doorway to the west. The two-flight open stairway leads to the second floor bedroom. The stairway opens in to a hall running east to west (See HABS photo # KS-54-P-2). At the east end is the full bathroom (8'6" x 7'6"). To the north of the bath is one bedroom (12' x 12'), opposite the stairway is the master bedroom (11' x 14') with the small rear bedroom at the west end of the house (8'3" x 10'). The basement is reached via the back stairway that begins at the south end of the kitchen. The full basement follows the shape of the house and consists of two undifferentiated rooms with a door to the outside on the west side. The laundry room is 19'6" x 28' and the smaller room to the west is 9' x 6'.

2. Stairways: Building # 234 has a central, open two-flight stairway which is located near the entry, west of the living room. It has a plain squared newel post with a flat rounded newel cap and squared balustrade with a rounded handrail. The first, pine step has rounded corners and this and the next two steps are triangular and form a curved landing. This same arrangement appears near the top of the steps (See HABS photo # KS-54-P-5). The rear stairway into the basement has plain wooden steps and a 2" x 4" plain wooden handrail.
3. Flooring: Building # 234 has narrow pine board flooring throughout.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All walls and ceilings in Building # 234 are plain, plastered, and painted white, except for the living room in # 234-B which has a sparked stucco covering. In the sun porches, the walls and ceilings are one and half inch wide vertical boards. The basement walls are unpainted brick.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: All of the doors in Building # 234 have a plain, four inch horizontal board doorhead. The doorjamb is of plain verticle boards with three parallel grooves on the outer edges. All doors have four vertical panels with two smaller horizontal panels side-by-side at the top (See HABS photo # KS-54-P-6). The front entry is slightly wider than the other doors and it has two lights at the top (See HABS photo # KS-54-P-5). There is a five-horizontal panel door in the basement. Between the living room and the sleeping porch is a set of French doors with ten square lights. The rear entrance has six lights over one large panel below.

- b. Windows: All of the windows in Building # 234 have the same surrounds as the doors. The windows have plain flat board sills with a smaller plain board below and are recessed about four inches.
  - 6. Decorative features and trim: In Building # 234-A all rooms have a picture molding about one foot below the ceiling, except the sleeping porch. In Building # 234-B, only the dining room has a picture molding. In all rooms of Building # 234, except in the sun porch, there is a baseboard about five inches wide with an ovolo molding near the floor and around the top edge. The bathroom has a similar but smaller baseboard. There are several built-in closets and cabinets. On the second floor opposite the stairway and between the middle and the east bedroom there is a linen closet about six feet tall with a door with three vertical panels. There is a built-in closet in the bathroom with one large cabinet door over another. In the west bedroom there is a small closet on the north wall by the entrance. It extends into the room about one foot and has three vertical side panels and one horizontal panel.
  - 7. Hardware: In Building # 234 the round doorknobs and the square doorplates are all plain brass with no decorative features. The hinges have all been painted over.
  - 8. Mechanical equipment:
    - a. Heating: In all rooms there are plain painted radiators which are connecting to the gas boiler (type National U.S. Radiator Gas Boiler #6-16) in the basement.
    - b. Plumbing: Building # 234 has modern plumbing in the kitchen and bathroom and a double-basin slate sink in the basement.
- D. Site:
- 1. General setting and orientation: Building # 234 faces eastward onto the grassy Lower Brick Row court. It is located on the southwest side, towards the foot of the ellipse shaped court and is surrounded by similar two-story brick duplexes on its north and south sides, and across the court towards the east. There are thirteen red brick quarters distributed around the court. Originally, three duplexes, in a row, were constructed here in 1889. Then, in 1903-1905 three more duplexes of another style were added opposite the originals as proposed by Capt. George E. Pond's 1880's plan (see Supplemental Material # 1). Finally, in 1931, eight other duplex type quarters, including Building # 234, were added to create the current oblong courtyard complex (see Supplemental Material # 2). Lower Brick Row



is nestled in a tree-shaded field that slopes southward away from Huebner Avenue (See HABS photo # KS-54-P-4). The group of buildings lie about a quarter of a mile west of the main post area.

2. Out-buildings: Garages for Building # 234 and the other two-story duplexes on Lower Brick Row were built in the late thirties under the Work Projects Administration effort. (Junction City Union, August 16, 1938) These garages are located on the other side of Lower Brick Row and each enclosure houses about six vehicles. The structures are made of rock-faced ashlar limestone and have flat concrete roofs.

### PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### A. Original Architectural Drawings:

1. Copies of the original floor plans and elevations, giving dimensions and materials of construction are available at the DEH office, Fort Riley, Kansas. These drawings include elevations, porch, and interior woodwork details, along with construction details.
2. Drawings of alterations to Building # 234 are also available at the DEH offices. These include alterations made to the roof in 1964 and bathroom modernizations done in 1978.

#### B. Early Views:

1. One photograph, ca. 1931 is located in the Engineer's Historical Record Book, DEH.

#### C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

- 7 a. Clipping Files, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.
- b. Junction City Union, available in bound form at the Geary County Museum, Junction City, and in microfilm at the Junction City Public Library.

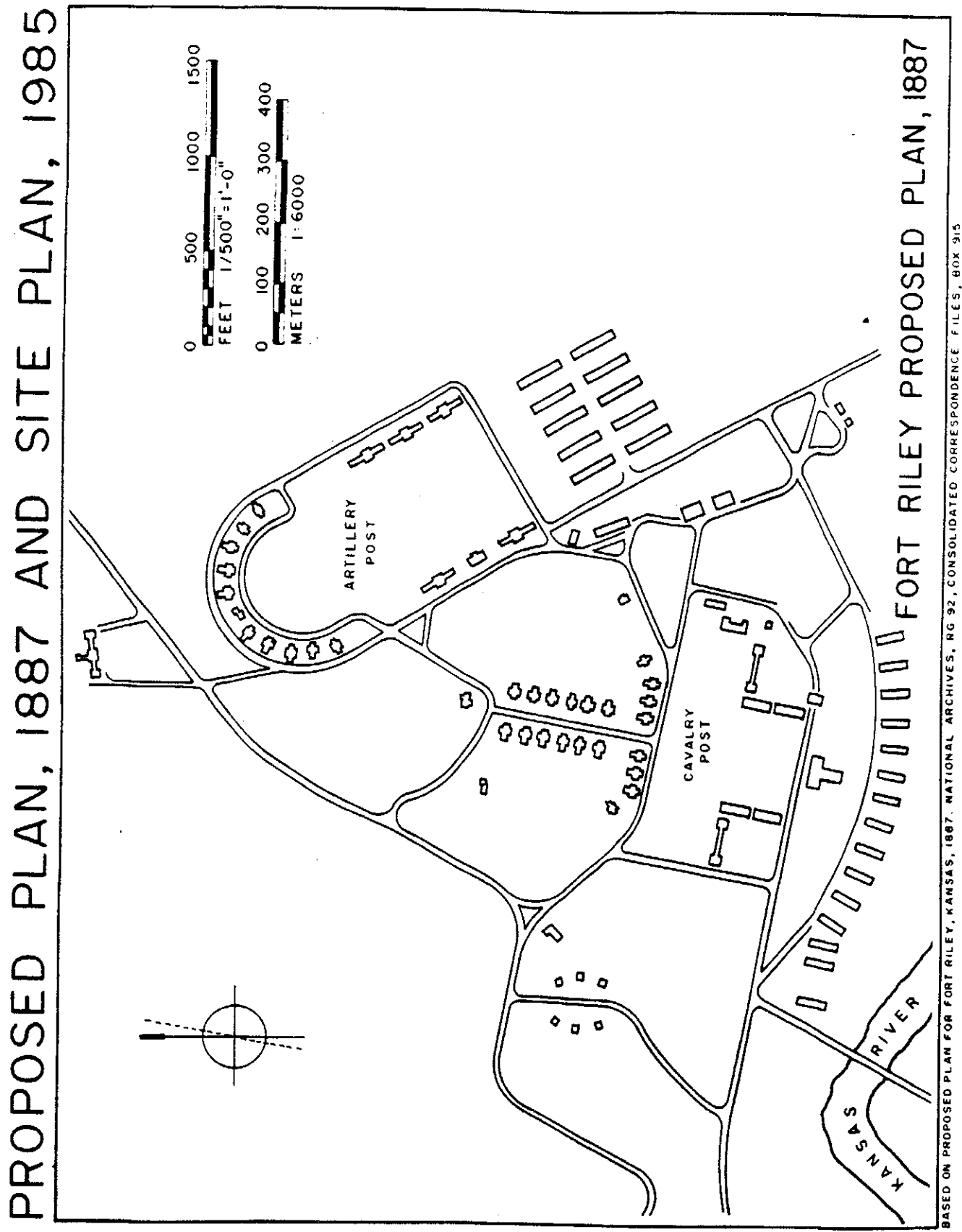
1. Secondary and Published Sources:

- a. Cyril M. Harris, ed. Dictionary of Architecture and Construction, New York, 1975.
- b. -----, Historic Architecture Sourcebook, New York, 1977.

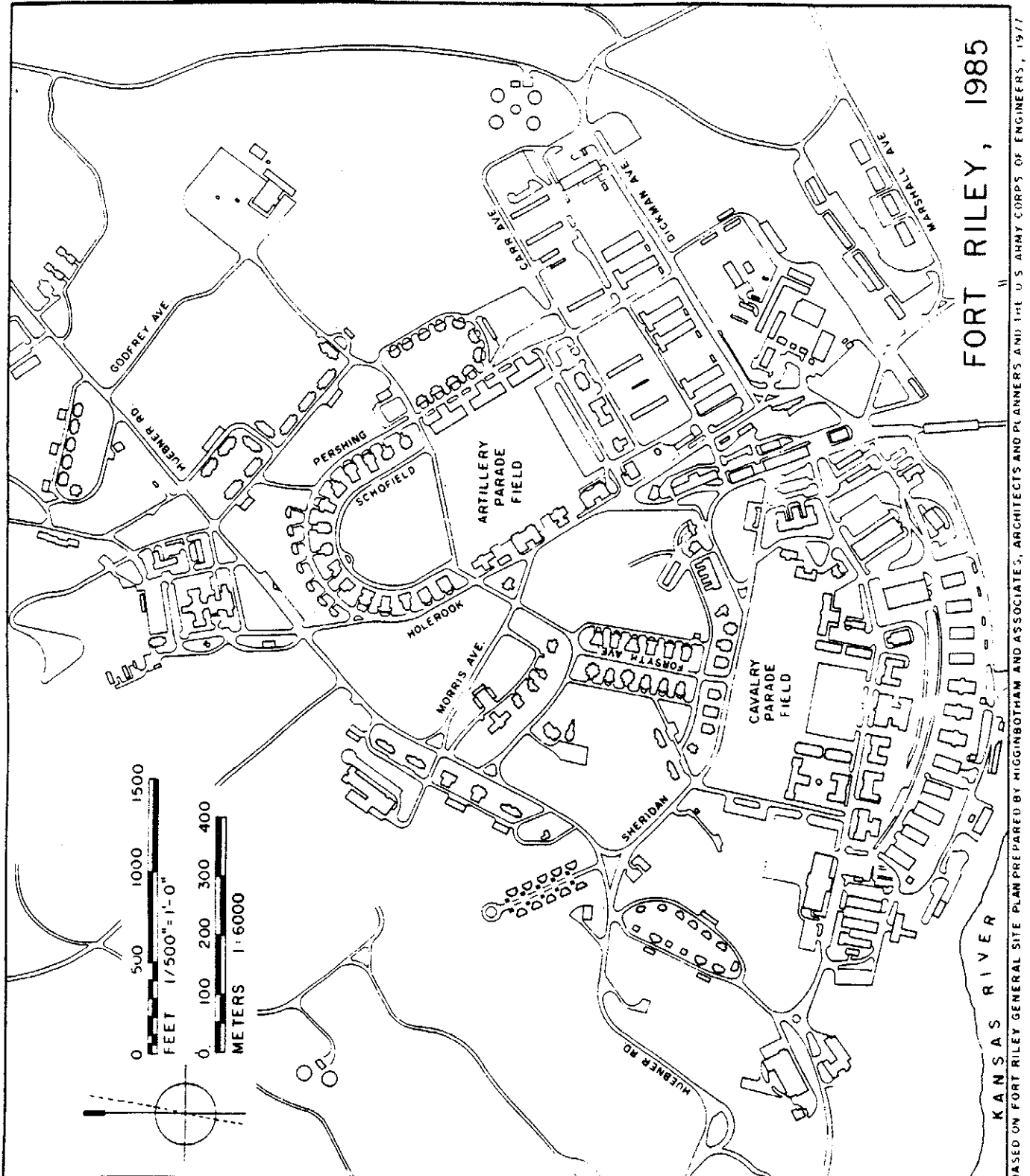
- c. Risch, Erna, Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps. Washington, D.C., 1962.

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Summer, 1985

D. Supplemental Material  
1. Fort Riley, Porposed Plan, 1887



2. Fort Riley, 1985



Part IV. Project Information

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the National Park Service in agreement with the post commander of Fort Riley, Kansas, and the headquarters of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, D.C. The project was completed under the general supervision of Robert J. Kapsch, Chief of the HABS/HAER Division. Sally Kress Tompkins served as Program Coordinator and Robie S. Lange as Project Leader. The Field Supervisor was James A. Glass (historian, Cornell University). The project historians were Catherine Crawford (University of Maryland) and Joseph Rodriguez (University of California). Large format photography was conducted by Mike Whye. Documentation was prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by Catherine Crawford..